United Nations A/58/402

General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 October 2003

Original: English

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 42
Follow-up to the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage

United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, 2002, and its follow-up

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The General Assembly, on 21 November 2001, adopted resolution 56/8, proclaiming 2002 the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the lead agency for the Year. The Director-General of UNESCO invited all Member States and United Nations sister agencies to base the activities of the Year on two principal pillars, dialogue and development, in order to focus international commitment to the cultural heritage cause.

Three objectives were set for the celebration of the Year: (a) to intensify the implementation of programmes, activities and projects aimed at promoting and protecting the world cultural heritage; (b) to promote education and raise public awareness in order to foster respect for national and world cultural heritage; and (c) to encourage voluntary contributions to finance and support activities aimed at promoting and protecting national and world cultural heritage. The present report provides an overview of activities carried out or led by UNESCO in the framework of the Year for Cultural Heritage, and refers to the spirit in which UNESCO will continue to work in this area.

* The report was received from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on 30 September 2003.

03-54127 (E) 271003

I. Introduction

1. The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) set up an interdisciplinary task force to pilot activities with respect to the educational, environmental and informational dimensions linked to the implementation of activities for the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage and to serve as secretariat for the Year.

2. An immediate task was the publication of informative material on the Year in the form of a kit explaining the richness and diversity of cultural heritage in the world and UNESCO's ways, means and mechanisms to protect, safeguard and sustain cultural heritage. It describes, in particular, the many manifestations and expressions of cultural heritage, whether inanimate or living, including cultural heritage sites, handicrafts, creativity, the arts and oral traditions. The kit also provides an overview of the UNESCO commitment to heritage protection over more than 50 years. It supports an inclusive vision of cultural heritage, stressing its dynamic and evolutionary nature. The kit met with widespread success with UNESCO partners, which include national commissions, non-governmental organizations, development banks and private foundations, as well as the United Nations system. It was perceived as a comprehensive and unique tool to raise awareness of the indivisibility of the tangible and intangible expressions of cultural heritage and of the need to sustain cultural diversity and dialogue among cultures and peoples in the spirit of the United Nations Global Agenda for Dialogue Among Civilizations. It helped serve the cause of dialogue among civilizations and cultures by reiterating the humanistic assumption of Javier Pérez de Cuellar's report entitled *Our Creative Diversity* (UNESCO, 1995), which stated firmly that no culture is an island and that cultural heritage is a result of influences, appropriation and exchange through the centuries, between peoples and identities.

3. The logo that was designed for the Year also helped convey the message that culture is the fruit of creativity and influences. The success and impact of the information material, which was also widely diffused on the web, can be assessed from the countless requests for the use and reproduction of the Year's logo not only by Member States, culture and education ministries and local institutions, but also by numerous grass-roots organizations in all regions. UNESCO also received immediate offers to translate the material into local languages. Several countries launched national campaigns for the Year and devoted celebrations and web sites to it.

4. An updated calendar of the Year for Cultural Heritage was also produced, containing references to some 300 initiatives at the national, regional and international levels. National campaigns aiming at raising awareness among the general public of the values enshrined in cultural heritage included exhibitions, festivals, photo competitions, youth contests, awards for the conservation of monuments and in artistic disciplines, the striking of commemorative medals and the printing of postage stamps and publications on national heritage. Several countries also marked national heritage days, weeks or months by offering free access to museums, sites, conferences, lectures and radio and television productions. The non-governmental organizations maintaining official relations with the United Nations system, and UNESCO in particular, launched the campaign Heritage for a Culture of Peace with the aim of enhancing the role of local heritage as a vehicle of peace-building.

II. World heritage: a shared legacy and a common responsibility

5. The focus of the Year was major regional and international conferences with the aim of advancing the international consensus on innovative ways and means for the effective safeguarding of cultural heritage and advancing a global and holistic approach to the notion of cultural heritage. In this respect, the international congress entitled World Heritage 2002: Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility, held in Venice from 14 to 16 November 2002, in cooperation with the authorities of Italy, deserves mention. The congress was a celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention of 1972, and it brought together more than 600 participants from all over the world. Nine specialized workshops involved in this celebration focused on specific measures, both technical and legal, to ensure the preventive conservation of world heritage. They stressed the need for UNESCO to strengthen its role in conserving our world heritage in partnership with the States parties to the World Heritage Convention, civil society and the private sector.

6. The World Heritage Convention is one of the most universally recognized international conventions. As at June 2003, there were 189 States parties to the Convention. The World Heritage List, as at July 2003, included 754 properties — 582 cultural sites, 149 natural sites and 23 mixed properties (both cultural and natural) — in the 189 States. The Convention, it should be recalled, was born of two separate movements, one focusing on the preservation of cultural monuments and the other on nature conservation. The meshing and merging of these two movements has given rise to international action in support of world heritage, providing a platform for the protection of both cultural heritage and the environment, whether natural or itself cultural, as is illustrated by the concept of "cultural landscapes". The extraordinary success achieved by this Convention deserves to be celebrated. But we must also look to the future, and reflect on the challenges that lie ahead.

7. Major efforts were also devoted during the Year for Cultural Heritage to increasing public awareness, involvement and support for world heritage through communication. Several public information activities were carried out in this respect, such as itinerant exhibitions, thematic press workshops, documentary film series focusing on UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the production of a world heritage calendar and cooperation agreements between UNESCO private partners for the production of video films on world heritage.

8. The *World Heritage Review* received enhanced support, and requests for distribution in English, French and Spanish have increased. A Russian edition has been produced since the beginning of 2002. The *World Heritage Papers* series received additional support; publications included a guide to international assistance, a periodic report on Africa and papers on managing tourism at World Heritage Sites, the World Heritage marine biodiversity workshop and the identification and documentation of modern heritage.

9. The World Heritage Partnerships Initiative was launched for the initial period 2002 to 2007, focusing especially on public/private partnerships. New partnerships were announced at the Venice congress in November 2002. These included a tripartite agreement among UNESCO, the United Nations Foundation and Conservation International worth $15 million. A similar partnership is under negotiation with the World Wildlife Fund in the United States of America. Fauna

and Flora International also pledged to cooperate with UNESCO, the United Nations Foundation and other interested partners to build a rapid response mechanism to respond to threats to world heritage natural sites and generate the initial capital needed for a fund that will support the mechanism's operations. An agreement with the Grand Circle Foundation has been finalized, which pledges $100,000 per year to selected world heritage properties over a five-year period, and a partnership with Hewlett Packard is under discussion. A partnership with international space agencies was launched. New initiatives are currently being developed with the European Space Agency, the University of Ghent and University of Louvain la Neuve in Belgium, the Brazilian and Argentine space agencies and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States of America in order to better monitor and map world heritage properties.

10. A number of bilateral cooperation agreements with States parties to the 1972 Convention emerged from the Venice congress in order to promote implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Their purpose is to identify natural and cultural sites for inclusion on the World Heritage List, to provide technical assistance to nominating countries, to enhance the management of sites already listed and, in this context, to develop projects for which funding may be sought, in particular from international cooperation agencies. Following earlier agreements with France and Japan to support world heritage projects and monitoring activities, new agreements with Australia, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have been signed. Significant earmarked contributions have also been gratefully received from a number of States parties during the Year for Cultural Heritage.

11. UNESCO is duty bound to spare no effort to implement the World Heritage Convention, and to ensure that a number of recent and unfortunate trends in the evolution of societies are reversed. While we must work closely with States parties, we also have an enormous task to accomplish vis-à-vis the general public. The last two centuries have brought unprecedented changes in the political, ideological, economic, technological and cultural spheres. Millions of men and women have been torn from their traditional environments and ancestral tasks in order to assume new roles, frequently leading them to relinquish what once formed the very cornerstone of their identity and cultural heritage.

III. Protecting intangible cultural heritage

12. In September 2002, UNESCO organized in Istanbul the third round table of ministers of culture on the theme "Intangible cultural heritage — a mirror of diversity", at the generous invitation of the Turkish authorities. Representatives of 110 countries, including 71 ministers of culture, as well as of nine intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, participated in this two-day meeting. It culminated in the adoption of the Istanbul Declaration, which contains a set of guiding principles for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and is aimed at building international solidarity in this endeavour. In this context, the idea of drafting a convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is endorsed. During the Year for Cultural Heritage, drafting this convention was one of the prime objectives of UNESCO, the aim being to building a normative framework for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage that would eventually become as effective as the World Heritage Convention is for tangible cultural and natural heritage.

13. The reputation of UNESCO is largely built on its work in the field of tangible heritage. When, in 1972, the General Conference adopted the World Heritage Convention, this was not only an event in political and legal terms but also an important conceptual innovation. For the first time, cultural heritage and natural heritage were combined in the same legal framework. It is increasingly evident that in many societies traditional forms of expression are undermined by globalization. The trends towards cultural homogenization that we witness in so many facets of life today can present a threat to the survival of many unique forms of cultural expression. The disappearance of this heritage is reflected in a diminishment of cultural diversity worldwide. Intangible cultural heritage urgently needs to be protected and revitalized, and each Government should take the necessary measures to ensure this. UNESCO, the only organization within the United Nations to have a mandate in the field of culture, has long played a leading role in this regard.

14. Intangible cultural heritage is gaining increasing recognition worldwide for the fundamental role it plays in our lives in the maintenance and enhancement of cultural identity and diversity. It urgently requires increasing protection in order to ensure its continuity and development. This is largely due to the specific nature of that heritage, which covers the most fundamental yet vulnerable aspects of living culture and tradition, most often embodied in the spiritual life, knowledge, skills and processes of an individual or a community.

15. At a time when heavy question marks hang over the future of cultural diversity as it faces the impact of globalization, we have to confront the fact that the most vulnerable aspect of the cultural identity of peoples throughout the world is their intangible cultural heritage. It is therefore the duty of UNESCO to alert public opinion to the importance of this heritage and to encourage Member States to draw up inventories of it, protect it and revitalize it. While globalization entails increasing economic interdependence and a stepping up of cultural interaction, it also presents a risk in the cultural sphere, for it threatens the survival of many forms of cultural expression. This impoverishment of cultural life affects us all as world citizens. Culture, which is intrinsically plural, diverse and constantly evolving, weaves the fabric of our societies, our memory, our manifold identities, our creativity — in short, our inner existence.

16. The preservation and promotion of cultural diversity are fundamental missions of UNESCO. Cultural diversity, however, cannot be maintained solely by the preservation of the material vestiges of the past. It requires, too, the preservation and promotion of what is now called the intangible cultural heritage, which is the melting pot of creativity and the mainspring of living cultures. Action to promote the intangible cultural heritage will aim to encourage all States, with the active cooperation of researchers, creators and custodians of culture, to identify more precisely the forms and items of the cultural heritage, to make States and communities aware of the value of and their responsibilities in respect of such heritage through legislative, institutional, educational, promotional and communication activities and, lastly, to mobilize the international community through the establishment of technical and financial mechanisms for cooperation and assistance. The Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity is meant to provide the greatest number of countries with an opportunity to demonstrate the richness of their heritage. During the Year, the preparations for the second Proclamation of Masterpieces were launched, and the secretariat received 66 candidature files. Preparatory assistance granted to 41 projects provided expertise and facilitated the

organization of meetings at the local and national levels, consultations and inventories of indicative lists, workshops and seminars, as well as the compilation of required documentation and the undertaking of fieldwork.

17. Over one year, during a series of meetings, experts elaborated a working definition of intangible cultural heritage, together with a glossary. In September 2002, in the course of intergovernmental meetings of experts, the draft convention was elaborated and in June 2003 was approved for submission to the UNESCO General Conference at its thirty-second session, in 2003. The proposed international standard-setting instrument devised by UNESCO member States is the most effective means of encouraging member States to engage in urgent actions for the protection of intangible heritage.

18. In the same spirit, preserving and revitalizing local languages and cultural practices specific to certain localities also help to enhance cultural diversity and to protect cultural heritage. By section II of its resolution 56/262 of 15 February 2002, the General Assembly called upon Member States and the United Nations to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by the peoples of the world. Languages form part of the world's cultural heritage, and it is this spirit that helped UNESCO promote greater awareness of the role of languages as vehicles of cultural heritage.

19. UNESCO is concerned by the threat faced by many languages of the world, which jeopardizes the cultural diversity that they embody. The 2002 edition of the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*, published by UNESCO, reported that half of the 6,000 or so languages spoken in the world are endangered, and with them an irreplaceable dimension of our knowledge and understanding of human thought. The process whereby languages are disappearing is a continuous one, and not a new phenomenon. However, the past 30 years or so have seen a dramatic increase in the death or disappearance of languages, concurrently with the rapid spread of globalization.

20. To appropriately address what should be considered not only an irreversible loss for humanity and a reduction of the sum of human thought and knowledge, but also a factor of tension and potential conflict among communities, UNESCO has launched several programmes and activities aimed at the promotion of multilingualism and linguistic diversity, notably in the fields of culture, communication and education.

21. In this context, UNESCO has carried out priority actions, including the publication of the UNESCO *Red Book of Languages in Danger of Disappearing*, which covers seriously endangered languages in the South-Western Pacific, Siberia, Australia, Indonesia and Thailand, and the production of a database of endangered languages. The UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing* has also aroused much interest among scholars and journalists, and has become a reference book for the general public (an enhanced online version of the *Atlas* is currently being developed). Furthermore, in March 2003, in the framework of the follow-up to the Year for Cultural Heritage, UNESCO brought together experts from all over the world, including native speakers of endangered languages, with the aim of refining and re-targeting the organization's action in the field of endangered languages. Having analysed the situation in various regions of the world and examined existing resolutions and declarations covering the domain, the experts recommended a set of action plans that will inspire the work of UNESCO in the years to come.

22. Member States were encouraged, in particular, (a) to survey and profile languages found to be endangered, (b) to actively promote the recognition of endangered languages of their countries, (c) to encourage the documentation of endangered languages, (d) to create conditions to facilitate the active use of and access to those languages, (e) to foster speech communities' pride in their own languages and cultures, as well as to secure equal prestige for all languages of a State, (f) to explore the economic and social benefits of linguistic and cultural diversity, as a stimulus for sustainable development, and (g) to provide, where feasible and with assistance from the international community, funding for documentation, revitalization and strengthening programmes for endangered languages.

23. Yet action in this domain will need further reinforcement. It will be crucial to increase the awareness not only of Governments but also of civil society at large in regard to language endangerment in the contemporary world and the consequent need to respond by adopting well-founded multilingual approaches in future. The promotion of multilingualism is aimed at stressing the value of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the peoples of the world, and hence of the richness of the world's cultural heritage.

24. Finally, in the field of the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, a partnership with the Discovery Channel has resulted in the production of a series of short films on nine endangered languages in various countries and the production of video recordings of the She and Manchu languages.

IV. Cultural heritage, dialogue and post-conflict intervention

25. The cultural heritage is increasingly targeted as the embodiment of collective memory when conflicts or outbreaks of intolerance occur. Intercultural dialogue now holds a key position in the international political agenda; hence the importance of the cultural component in the international fight against manifestations of intolerance and its most extreme forms, including terrorism. In order to make the dialogue of cultures a guarantee of peace, cooperation and development, the cultural heritage in pre- and post-conflict situations must be rehabilitated and efforts to secure intercommunity reconciliation must be achieved, combined with the strengthening of related standard-setting action and the establishment of new measures to introduce punishment for the destruction of the heritage.

26. We have witnessed in very recent years increased destruction of cultural heritage, which can become a prime target, especially in intra-State conflicts, for reasons of symbolism, identity, aggressiveness, misunderstanding and rejection. In the last decade or so, UNESCO has played a high-profile, leading role internationally in coordinating complex operations to safeguard heritage damaged or threatened by conflicts, with the assistance of many different partners, both public and private. Through its standard-setting action, carried out in parallel with its operational action, UNESCO has endeavoured to alert decision makers to the compelling need to ratify existing international instruments, particularly the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954. The establishment of dialogue and development will be the pillars of the strategy, which will be aimed at highlighting the role of cultural heritage in preserving and rebuilding peace after civil strife or armed conflict. In cases where the cultural heritage has become a target on account of its identity value, UNESCO

endeavours to bring together the various warring parties and populations concerned to encourage them to resume intercommunity dialogue through the reconstruction of their heritage. In some cases this will mean restoring the bonds between the population concerned, its history and its cultural affiliations, while in others it will mean helping to restore a sense of common ownership of the shared heritage that has been damaged or is a source of conflict. This will be done by retracing the various cultural components of the population and of the monuments representing each one of them.

27. The Year for Cultural Heritage witnessed the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan by the Taliban in the latter part of 2002. UNESCO was faced with the challenge of handling the international community's outcry and responded with countless appeals and messages directed at the media, while simultaneously organizing complex missions to Afghanistan. Since then, UNESCO has coordinated all the international and bilateral activities to safeguard the cultural heritage of Afghanistan, as requested by the Afghan authorities and the member States. This has involved, inter alia, ensuring the functioning of the International Coordination Committee set up by a decision of the UNESCO Executive Board and the functioning of the secretariat of the cultural heritage, media and sports programme entrusted to it by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

28. The role of UNESCO as a scientific and technical coordinator of complex operations aimed at preserving heritage threatened or damaged by conflict has been further enhanced and promoted during the Year for Cultural Heritage. This has been reflected in the increase in requests for emergency operations and technical assistance. The funding for such operations had to be met under the regular programme when the extrabudgetary funds raised were insufficient. Activities implemented in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia and Palestine, for example, bring into play many different public and private sector partners, working together for the sake of safeguarding the cultural heritage.

29. However, even more importantly, experience has shown that cultural heritage can also play a significant role in building and preserving peace, notably following periods of armed conflict or civil strife. Though the heritage of a country, people or community can all too often become a target during conflict, owing to its significance as an expression of identity, it can also become a rallying point for former adversaries, enabling them to rebuild ties and dialogue and to redesign a common identity and future together.

30. The UNESCO strategy is to help re-establish the links between the populations concerned and their cultural history, helping them to develop a sense of common ownership of heritage that is a source of cultural identity for various segments of society. Early this year, UNESCO was entrusted by the Afghan Interim Administration with the role of coordinating all international efforts to safeguard Afghanistan's cultural heritage. That heritage is quite remarkable in its richness, diversity and historical influence. Afghanistan has been at the crossroads of cultures since time immemorial and was an important junction on the ancient Silk Route. Its distinctive cultural heritage reflects a history shaped by complex encounters between Achaemenid Persia, Alexandrian Greece, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, and it is therefore the living testimony of over 2,000 years of history and the expression of many different peoples, cultures and beliefs. UNESCO is engaged actively in mobilizing financial and technical resources to rehabilitate and strengthen the protection of Afghanistan's endangered cultural heritage. On the basis

of the recognition that cultural traditions and practices provide the most stable foundation for sustainable social and economic development, UNESCO is promoting the essential role of culture in the overall reconstruction process in Afghanistan.

31. UNESCO action for intercommunity reconciliation has also been carried out in South-East Europe, the Caucasus region, the Middle East, Cyprus, Cambodia, Timor-Leste and both countries of the Korean peninsula with a view to strengthening national capacities for heritage conservation and management. As part of its operations, UNESCO has sought particularly to promote the implementation and/or ratification of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two additional Protocols, through awareness, negotiation and training activities. Lastly, it has directed its efforts towards the preparation of a draft declaration concerning the intentional destruction of cultural heritage, thus aiming to strengthen the organization's international standard-setting action. The draft declaration will be submitted to the UNESCO General Conference for adoption in the fourth quarter of 2003.

32. In numerous operational projects, UNESCO demonstrated that cultural heritage could be an instrument for peace and reconciliation by organizing intercommunity reconciliation activities that focus on the joint safeguarding of heritage affected by conflicts. Foremost among these is the programme for the safeguarding and development of the site of Angkor, Cambodia, a site that is the emblem of a nation. Other projects include (a) workshops for conservation specialists from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, (b) the safeguarding of cultural sites of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the support of the Republic of Korea, (c) the start of reconstruction work on the Mostar Old Bridge in Bosnia and Herzegovina, jointly with the World Bank, (d) expert missions to Kosovo to evaluate the status of the heritage of the various communities and to make recommendations for its safeguarding, (e) the training of museum professionals in Timor-Leste as part of the project to create the Timor-Leste cultural centre and national museum, (f) the rehabilitation of the Kabul Museum and the sites of Bamiyan, Herat and Jam in Afghanistan and (g) studies for the restoration, in cooperation with UNDP, of two monuments in Cyprus, one Orthodox and the other Muslim.

33. Likewise, with the objective of fostering intercultural dialogue by encouraging positive convergence between cultures through the presentation and recognition of a common heritage and plural identities, UNESCO paid increased attention during the Year for Cultural Heritage to the tangible and oral heritage of Africa and the Caribbean related to the slave trade, with a view to establishing slavery museums in Angola, Liberia and the United Republic of Tanzania, and designing cultural tourism routes and documenting oral traditions related to the tragedy of slavery. This work will feed directly into the programme for 2004, proclaimed by the United Nations as the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition. Under the plan aimed at fostering intercultural dialogue with the Arab region, a film on the Arab cultural heritage has been produced. With regard to the Mediterranean region, the project entitled Navigation of Knowledge was launched in May 2002. Subsidized by the European Union, it gathers scientists from nine countries of the region who share concerns about the underwater cultural heritage and the historic Mediterranean dockyards threatened by neglect.

V. Education on the value of cultural heritage, capacity-building and cooperation

34. Greater emphasis was also placed during the Year on enhancing educational activities targeting protection of cultural heritage. Through educational projects, UNESCO sought to mobilize young people to protect and promote cultural heritage while strengthening intercultural dialogue. Special attention was given to the wide distribution of heritage educational material, such as the education kit "World heritage in young hands", which was translated into more than 20 languages. To maximize the use of these kits, eight teacher-training seminars were organized in the Philippines, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, the Syrian Arab Republic, France, Slovakia and Sweden. A world heritage skills development course for young people in the Arab region was held at Petra, Jordan, in April 2002, and another one on mobilizing youth for world heritage was organized in Treviso, Italy, in November 2002. UNESCO also set up a web site on formal and informal arts education, containing the findings of regional consultations in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and the Arab region, with a view to assisting policy makers at the national and regional levels to frame their art policies. An International Conference on the theme "World heritage in young hands — a dialogue among civilizations" was held in Aswan, Egypt, in February 2002. Other initiatives currently being developed are focusing on multimedia educational material on specific World Heritage Sites, such as cartoon series and posters done "by the young for the young". Following the world heritage skills development course in Jordan, a manual illustrating best-practice examples is currently being finalized in collaboration with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property.

35. To increase capacity-building in this regard, UNESCO continued to assist States Parties to protect world heritage with training courses, seminars and other technical cooperation activities and on-site conservation of properties in Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Myanmar, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, the Philippines, Qatar, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

36. Committed to the concept that culture, and especially cultural heritage, is a condition for sustainable development, UNESCO implemented various projects relating to the eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty. Projects involved the development of cultural ecotourism in mountainous regions in selected developing countries, aimed at poverty eradication through tourism; the reduction of rural-urban migration and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage for the sustainable development of tourism in 10 countries of the Sahara region; traditional crafts as a window to job opportunities for the poorest youth, aimed at providing disadvantaged children and youth with skills imparting awareness of their cultural heritage; and a focus on unemployed youth, primarily in rural communities, with a view to the development of sustainable heritage tourism in selected countries of the Caribbean.

37. Focusing an enchanted, adulatory and nostalgic gaze on the past while turning a blind eye to the present and rejecting all idea of change is a perfectly sterile approach. That is why the founding concept of world heritage has led UNESCO along the path to sustainable development: "sustainable" both in the ecological sense and in the heritage sense. The World Summit on Sustainable Development stressed the need for culture to win its place as the fourth pillar of sustainable development, alongside economy, environment and social concerns. Such a conception of heritage calls for everyone to respect the enduring historical significance of sites, whether they be those included on the World Heritage List or others that, although of comparable significance, have not yet been listed — and may never be. The Year for Cultural Heritage helped reiterate firmly that World Heritage Sites should serve as an example and become conservation models for all sites, including those of more local interest. From the perspective of UNESCO, the objectives of the International Year of Mountains, promoted by Kyrgyzstan with the support of UNESCO, tied in perfectly with those of the Year for Cultural Heritage. The promotion of sustainable economic development in mountain regions is one clear point of intersection. Properly managed, cultural ecotourism can contribute to the preservation of culture and nature in mountains. There is a need, however, to develop guidelines on how such cultural ecotourism can benefit mountain communities, drawing upon the findings of pilot projects. UNESCO is currently implementing such a pilot project in the mountains of Central Asia. Project activities include training local people as tour guides, establishing community-based home-stay accommodation and training in the production of high-quality craft items. These activities, focused on young people and women, contribute directly to building the economic viability of isolated mountain communities as ecotourism destinations; at the same time, they reinforce local communities' cultural identities and promote dialogue with visitors from other cultures.

38. At its fifty-seventh session, on 4 December 2002, the General Assembly devoted one day of plenary meetings to marking the end of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage. Representatives of Member States from all geographic regions took the floor and reaffirmed the symbolic importance of the Year. They specifically underlined the common responsibility for cultural heritage and its role in promoting mutual understanding and in reconciling history with modern times, as well as the important role local communities have in safeguarding it. They further stressed the need for further progress in international legal protection of cultural heritage and called for international strategies and concerted action for its safeguarding. Pursuant to the discussion, on 16 December 2002, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/158, by which, inter alia, it reaffirmed the importance of further developing international mechanisms for safeguarding and protecting the world cultural heritage and encouraged UNESCO to explore ways to intensify international cooperation in this regard. It also invited the Director-General of UNESCO to address and present to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session an overview of the activities undertaken during the Year for Cultural Heritage.

39. To further promote inter-agency cooperation in favour of cultural heritage in the framework of the Year for Cultural Heritage, the Director-General of UNESCO called a consultative meeting on 14 March 2002 of all the United Nations system's heads of agencies to discuss the theme "Cultural heritage: anchoring cultural diversity in sustainable development". It focused on enhanced mechanisms to sustain the world's cultural diversity; the role of cultural heritage in sustainable

development; cultural heritage as a factor for social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and reconciliation; and future cooperation among organizations of the United Nations system.

VI. Conclusions

40. **The experience gained by UNESCO over the years and the evolving content of the concept of cultural heritage have enabled it to renew its approach to world heritage. For UNESCO, protecting tangible and intangible cultural heritage means ensuring its capacity for renewal. It is therefore especially fitting that 2002 was designated by the United Nations as the Year for Cultural Heritage, thereby making a very real link with the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001. Similarly, the thirtieth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention afforded an opportunity to identify future paths that will be explored, in particular the scope for strong partnerships between the public and private sectors and civil society. In this context, full importance must be accorded to the intangible heritage, which is still largely neglected in favour of the monumental vision of heritage. That is why UNESCO will be working actively to promote the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage and to make it an integral part of preservation policies, since it constitutes a key component of cultural diversity and human creativity. The gradual loss of such heritage and its vulnerability to the impact of globalization call for a great effort on the part of UNESCO, which will aim to combine efforts under various approaches in order to keep it alive by making young people, in particular, aware of the values of cultural heritage.**

41. **Above the door of the Kabul Museum, persons unknown wrote the message, "A nation is alive when its culture is alive". This statement could almost have been taken as the motto for the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage. There are numerous examples showing that new approaches to the management of cultural heritage to promote economic growth actually create employment opportunities for local populations in crafts, cultural tourism and new trades that emerge.**

42. **Safeguarding cultural heritage does not imply solely preserving cultural monuments, but also reviving living culture worldwide, traditional festivals, performing arts and crafts, re-establishing theatres and cinemas, and promoting cultural industries in order to help people to recover their cultural identity, preserve their timeless traditions and invigorate their artistic and intellectual creativity.**

43. **The results of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage will not be immediately measured, but it can no doubt be affirmed that it offered a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage worldwide. It provided the opportunity to discover and better understand our own and other peoples' cultural heritage, and the need to protect, cherish, restore and preserve it.**